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Selected data from the Southern Regional S-44 Project entitled "Factors in the Adjustment of Families and Individuals in Low-Income Rural Areas" were analyzed to determine the work patterns of women in low-income rural areas. Objectives of the study were to describe the labor force experience of women, to report the attitudes of employed women toward gainful employment, and to study the patterns of labor force participation as related to marital status, stages of the family life cycle, age, education, and level of living. The sample population included 1,781 women from 30 counties in 7 southern states. These rural women were found to be less educated, slightly older, and willing to work for relatively low wages when compared to all working women in the nation. The working women studied indicated favorable attitudes toward their work situation. One of the basic causes of the persistence of low income in rural areas was determined to be the subcultural orientation toward low aspiration and satisfaction with the present situation. (JH)

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SOUTHERN COOPERATIVE SERIES

BULLETIN NO. 116

This bulletin is the 116th in the series of Southern Cooperative Bulletins. It presents an analysis of selected data from the Southern Regional S-44 Project entitled "Factors in the Adjustment of Families and Individuals in Low-Income Rural Areas." The committee conducting the study is composed of representatives of the Agricultural Experiment Stations of Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

Bulletin No. 116, like others in the Southern Cooperative Series, is in effect a separate publication by each of the cooperating stations and is mailed under the frank and indicia of each.

Since the bulletin is identical for the several cooperating stations, it is suggested that a copy, or copies, be requested from only one source. Requests from outside the cooperating states should be addressed to the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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Conclusions and Implications

Low-income rural areas represent a potential source of womanpower for the nation's labor force. Women from these areas who enter employment, however, are not typical of the women in the nation who do so. These rural women are less educated, are slightly older, and are willing to work for relatively low wages. These findings suggest that low-income rural communities will contribute to employed womanpower, but in a specialized way.

Attitudes are not a block to gainful employment for women in low-income rural areas. The working women studied indicated favorable attitudes toward their work situation. Married women continued their employment until the arrival of children.

This study reveals that certain employment opportunities would represent a way out for rural people with low incomes and levels of living. When the wife worked, the total gross family income was raised by approximately the amount of her earnings. When female heads of households entered the labor force, their earnings contributed the large part (if not all) to the total income of the household.

One important implication for program planners was evident in the responses of the women interviewed. Findings revealed that one of the basic causes of the persistence of low income in rural areas is the subcultural orientation which the people hold. Although their conditions when compared with national standards are considered problems, they are quite acceptable to local residents. Before programs to raise levels of living can succeed, the women and their families will have to aspire to higher incomes and levels of living. Employment opportunities then will be welcomed as a means whereby they can improve their present conditions.

The Labor Force Characteristics of Women in Low-Income Rural Areas of the South

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ALVIN L. BERTRAND*

Introduction

The Problem

The need for reliable and systematic information about women in the labor force is great. Many public and private agencies have use for such information in connection with their employment needs and problems. An understanding of these phenomena is also necessary for labor policy makers in industry and government. Educators need greater insight into the work patterns of women so that educational progress may be designed to prepare female students adequately for work careers. Beyond practical questions, such as the above, there are considerations of import to national goals and progress. For example, thought must be given to the question of whether or not female labor force participation is necessary for the high level of living which is a characteristic of today's society. These and like considerations highlight the importance of studies of this nature, for the nation and for individuals.

Opportunities for female employment vary from area to area because the technological and socio-psychological changes have not been equally diffused throughout the United States. Rural women, for example, do not participate in the work force to the same extent as urban women. Because of these differences there is a special need for information concerning the work patterns of women in low-income rural areas.

Source of Data: The Southern Regional S-44 Project

This study is an analysis of selected data from the Southern Regional S-44 Project entitled "Factors in the Adjustment of Families and Individuals in Low-Income Rural Areas." The S-44 Study was proposed in the early 1950s. There was a need for a regional project to study the problems of adjustment of rural people in the South. The

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research design for the project was adopted in 1958 by representatives of the sponsoring Agricultural Experiment Stations of seven southern states.

The sample for the S-44 Study was designed by members of the Department of Experimental Statistics, North Carolina State College, Raleigh, North Carolina (one of the contributing states). It involved an area probability approach. The universe was composed of the counties in each state which had level of living indices below a prescribed level. The 1956 farm operator family level of living index was used as a guide in determining the low-income status of the counties. Subsamples were drawn so as to permit generalizations for important subregions in the South. Each subsample was to be self-weighing in order to avoid problems of combining data from different counties, states, and subregions. The final design of the sample provided for representativeness in each county.

The sample was drawn from the following states and counties:

Alabama: Clark, Monroe, Montgomery, and Tallapoosa.
Kentucky: Harlan, Perry, Whitney, and Wolfe.
Louisiana: East Feliciana, Franklin, Livingston, Natchitoches, and Union.
Mississippi: Clay, Coahoma, Holmes, Lawrence, Neshoba, and Tunica.
North Carolina: Anson, Ashe, and Robeson.
Tennessee: Hancock, Houston, Humphreys, and Union.
Texas: Burleson, Cass, Newton, and Upshar.

The sampling unit for the study was established as a household in which both the head and the homemaker were available for interview. The sample was designed to include approximately 100 households per county, with a total of about 2,500 households for the entire region. Interviews were completed with 1,908 households.

The same interview schedule was used in all states so that the data would be comparable. Regional representatives for states could add additional questions for particular purposes, but no question could be omitted. In its final form, the interview schedule included four sections, each one representing major dependent variables: socio-economic situation, social participation in formal groups, occupation, and level of living. Other questions were concerned with attitudes, communications, and characteristics of migrants from the household.

Data were collected by interviews with all household units. An interview manual was prepared for the interviewers in order to facilitate uniformity.

A regional code was constructed. Data were coded and punched in IBM cards in accordance with the code. Decks were distributed to all states.

A regional division of labor for data analysis was established. Re-

searchers at Louisiana State University assumed responsibility for analysis of the occupational data. This bulletin is a part of the occupational analysis.

Objectives

This study is designed to fill part of the void of information regarding the socio-economic characteristics of persons in low-income areas. The over-all objective is to determine the characteristics of women in a particular segment of the population, namely, those in low-income rural areas of the South.

The specific objectives of the research were:

1. To describe the labor force experience of women in low-income rural areas.
2. To study the patterns of labor force participation by women in low-income rural areas as these are related to marital status and to stages of the family life cycle.
3. To study the patterns of labor force participation by women in low-income rural areas as these are related to age, to education, and to level of living.
4. To report the attitudes of employed women in low-income rural areas toward gainful employment.

Social Setting of Study

It is apropos to approach a study of working women from the perspective of a review of recent trends in the family. In the United States the family traditionally has been an economic unit in which all the members put forth their efforts and skills for the production of necessary goods and services. A high degree of integration was promoted by the functioning of the family unit as an economic group. The rural family of today, in particular, retains characteristically strong family ties.[1] However, changes in family structure have occurred in both rural and urban families as a result of decreased isolation brought about by improvements in transportation and communication. Perhaps no change has affected the traditional roles and statuses of women more than the trend of employment outside the home. As pointed out elsewhere, technology and other factors are related to this trend.

The typical family in the United States has turned from being a production unit to being a consumption unit. This means that the family as a unit buys rather than produces food, furniture, clothing, and other commodities. The rural family has retained a sufficient resemblance to the former pattern to be described today as both a producing and a consuming unit.[2] However, the differences between rural and urban families are gradually being narrowed in the United States.

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[1]Alvin L. Bertrand, *Rural Sociology* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1958), 214-19.

[2]*Ibid.*

It has been stated that increased female labor force participation is both an inevitable and a permanent result of the above-mentioned changes in family structure.[3] If this is true, increased female work activity may be expected in the future, irrespective of a rise in levels of living which might reduce the economic necessity for women working.[4] This is, then, the social setting in the United States insofar as the future importance of the female labor force is concerned.

Theoretical Frame of Reference

To be meaningful, the analysis of findings from a study such as this must be done in terms of a theoretical frame of reference. The approach employed in this study has been termed the "subcultural approach to differences."[5] This approach assumes that cultural factors play a major role in accounting for personal and group deviation from societal norms. In other words, certain subgroups within a greater society deviate in certain cultural practices because of a peculiar history or because of peculiar geographic or social conditioning. This approach helps to explain why some persons act in ways differing from national cultural patterns, but at the same time are well adjusted to the demands of their subculture.

The concept of cultural relativity implies that a trait has meaning only in its cultural setting. The trait is "good" if it harmonizes with the rest of the culture in which it functions; "bad" if it does not. This basic premise of sociology and anthropology helps explain certain stresses within our own and other societies.

Since behavior, and especially "adjustive behavior," is the central concern of this study, it is apropos to review briefly "situational" factors which might be related to subcultural participation. The noted sociologist W. I. Thomas is responsible for this sociological method. He wrote, "The central problem in the general life process is one of adjustment, and the forms of adjustive effort are 'behavior'."[6] Because men, in their adjustive efforts, are never absolutely sure of the conditions to which they are adjusting, it is impossible to determine all the conditions and factors which may exist. As a result of this limitation, human behavior must always occur in terms of what is thought to exist. Men act "as if" the conditions really are as they imagine them to be.

As an analytical tool the concept of "situation" permits an accounting for behavior which occurs in different ways under different sub-

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[3]Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, *Women's Two Roles: Home and Work* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), 72; and C. E. V. Leser, "Trends in Women's Work Participation," *Population Studies*, 12 (November, 1958), 100-10.

[4]Myrdal and Klein, *Ibid.*

[5]Paul B. Horton and Gerald R. Leslie, *The Sociology of Social Problems* (New York. Appleton-Century-Croft, Inc., 1956), 28-40, 142-43.

[6]W. I. Thomas, *Primitive Behavior: An Introduction to the Social Sciences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1937), 1.

cultural conditions. Thomas wrote in 1931, "The study of the situation, the behavior in the situation, the changes brought about in the situation, and the resulting change in behavior represent the nearest approach the social scientist is able to make to the use of experiment in social research."[7] So important did he consider the "definition of the situation" in human behavior, that he boldly stated, "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences."[8] This statement has come to be widely quoted and used as an explanation of adjustive behavior.

The utility of the situational concept in the present study is that it clearly indicates that deviant behavior patterns may be explained by the fact that particular persons with subcultural experience define a "situation" somewhat differently than others. Such deviancy is a product of the physical and social life of the area.

The differences between the labor-force participation patterns of rural low-income women of the South and that characteristic of the national female labor force may be understood as subcultural differences or deviations. In other words, in theory, deviation from national female employment patterns would be correlated to the subcultural values and demands which make up the "situation" for low-income rural women.

Each time a finding of this study deviates from national norms, this fact is noted. These deviations may be explained, for the most part, in the above manner, *i.e.*, because of subcultural differences. To avoid redundancy, mention of the theoretical frame of reference is not made explicitly each time.

Selected Characteristics of All Women in the Sample Population

The purpose of this section is to describe selected characteristics of the 1,781 women studied. In the following discussion the data are analyzed for the women as a group. A knowledge of these characteristics for the sample is basic to an understanding of the socio-cultural variables affecting female labor-force participation within the group.

Employment Status

All women in the sample were classified by employment status. The majority of the women (58.2 per cent) were not employed, but more than one-quarter (26.2 per cent) of the women were working. The re-

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[7]Swann and others, "Essays on Research in the Social Sciences," in Edmund H. Volkart (ed.), *Social Behavior and Personality: Contributions of W. I. Thomas to Theory and Research* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1951), 88.

[8]W. I. Thomas and Dorothy Swaine Thomas, *The Child in America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1938), 572.

mainder of the women (13.8 per cent) were ineligible for the labor force, that is, they were retired or totally disabled (Table 1). Thirty-three of the respondents (1.9 per cent of the sample) were not classifiable in any of these categories because of lack of sufficient information.

TABLE 1.—Classification of Women in the Sample Population by Availability for Work and Employment Status

Availability For Work	Total		Unemployed		Employed		Retired or Disabled		No Information	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Fully able to work	1,207	72.7	859	83.0	411	88.0	...	...	27	81.8
Limited permanent disability	199	11.2	162	15.6	34	7.2	...	...	3	9.1
Total disability	115	6.5	...	...	11*	2.4	104	42.4	...	...
Retired (no disability)	147	8.3	...	...	6	1.3	141	57.6	...	...
No information	23	1.3	15	1.4	5	1.1	...	...	3	9.1
Total	1,781	100.0	1,036	100.0	467	100.0	245	100.0	33	100.0

*Women classified as employed and as totally disabled result from the definition of totally disabled. For example, total blindness is considered total disability, and yet many blind persons are actively employed.

A substantial number of women in low-income rural areas of the South are employed. The percentage of women employed in such areas of the South is small, however, compared with the 36.8 per cent of all United States women age 14 and over who are in the labor force.[9] The female employment rate in low-income rural areas of the South more closely approximates the female employment rate of the total rural women in the nation (27.3 per cent). This is not surprising since low-income areas are the most rural of rural America.[10] Despite an obvious need for additional income on the part of low-income rural families, women do not work as much. No doubt, cultural patterns and lack of opportunity are factors of imporance in this connection.

Marital Status and Family Characteristics

Over four-fifths of the women studied (84.0 per cent) were in a

[9]Unless otherwise stated, the comparisons are of data presented in the following section on characteristics of employed women in the sample. The source of such statistics is noted in that section.

[10]Harold F. Kaufman, *Rural Families with Low Incomes: Problems of Adjustment*, Sociology and Rural Life Series No. 9, (Mississippi Agricultural Experiment Station), February, 1957.

secondary household role as homemakers. The remaining women (16.0 per cent) were heads of households. National statistics show that only 10 per cent of the nation's households have female heads.[11] The rural low-income households of the South thus have 62 per cent more female heads than does the national population. This is an important variation from national trends.

The large majority of the women (84.0 per cent) were married. Of the remainder, most were widowed. This finding was expected and is a reflection of the differential longevity of women. The sample population included only 15 women never married.

It seems unusual that 11 of the women in the sample who were family heads were also married. This finding is contrary to the traditional role of males and females, and may indicate that the husband and wife were geographically separated.

In the majority of the households and families, there was a husband available for work. However, in 14.5 per cent of the families, the husband was totally disabled or retired. In an additional 16.0 per cent, no husband was present in the household; that is, the woman was head of the household.

When married women in the sample were classified by stage in the family cycle, an over-representation in the later stages was evident. A very small number of married women were young and childless, and only slightly more had a child who was age 3 or younger. Relatively large numbers of married women were older and had none of their children now residing in their households.

Age Status

Women in the sample population were generally older than women in the nation. For the sample, the median age of women reporting was 47.3 years. It is generally known that the rural population is characteristically an older one. This finding is thus not unusual.

Educational Status

The educational attainment of women in the sample population was low. The median years of school completed by those reporting was 8.4 years. The educational attainment for women in the nation (age 25 and over) is higher; the median was 10.9 years in 1960. The rural population is characteristically less well-educated than the national population as a whole. For example, in the same year, the median years of school completed by rural women in the nation (25 and over) was 9.8 years.[12] The lower educational attainment of women in the sample population, as well as the lower educational attainment of rural people generally,

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[11]U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, *1960 Handbook on Women Workers*, Bulletin 275 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 39.

[12]Bureau of the Census, *1960 Census of Population*, Social and Economic Characteristics, U.S. Summary (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), 207, Table 76.

is largely explained by the fact that the younger and more highly educated people migrate from rural to urban areas.

Total Family Income

The reported family income of all respondents was relatively low, as could be expected from the nature of the study. In this regard, a word of caution is advisable. Whether or not a given family considers itself "low-income" depends upon the levels and standards of the community or subculture of which it is a part.[13] Also, in rural areas, nonmonetary items, such as garden produce, frequently supplement monetary income. For these reasons, any comparison of rural low-income families with urban families having higher monetary income must be made with reservation.

The median income was $1,602. This sum represents the combined farm and nonfarm earnings of the family members. It also included income from other sources such as welfare payments, retirement income, worker's benefits, veteran's benefits, and fixed income from real estate or securities.

Level of Living

Level of living was measured by taking an inventory of the aids to house care which were available to each woman. Of the 13 items studied, the average number possessed by the families and/or households studied was 6.4. More than 9 out of 10 interviewees' homes were equipped with electricity. Over two-thirds of the homes contained mechanical refrigerators, and the same was true of gas or electric ranges and of washing machines. A small majority of the homes were equipped with piped water and kitchen sinks. The families or households of 6 out of every 10 women studied possessed an automobile. Few homes had central heating or were equipped with vacuum cleaners or electric sewing machines.

In an attempt to measure level of living aspiration, each woman was asked how she would spend an unexpected $2,000. The majority mentioned housing improvements as their first choice. A large percentage of the remainder mentioned living expenses.

To gain some understanding of interviewees' assessment of their living conditions, each woman was asked to comment on her satisfaction with the family income. The majority expressed satisfaction, although few said that it was *very* satisfactory.

Residence

The sample was made up entirely of rural residents. Interviewees' residence was classified as either rural farm or rural nonfarm, in accordance with census definitions. It was determined that the majority of the women in the sample (54.3 per cent) lived in rural nonfarm places. Slightly more than one-third (36.7 per cent) resided on farms.

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[13]Kaufman, *loc. cit.*

For the remainder of the women (8.9 per cent), type of residence could not be determined, but presumably was proportionate to the above dispersion.

Selected Characteristics of Employed Women in the Sample Population

In the sample population, women who were employed exhibited significantly different characteristics from women who were not employed but were eligible for employment. The purpose of this section is to present the findings of the study which relate certain major sociocultural variables to female labor-force participation. The variables analyzed are those which have been most closely related to female employment on the national level. The reason for this approach is two-fold. In the first place, these variables appear to be the most important determiners of women's work patterns. Secondly, use of these variables makes possible a comparison of findings with national data on female labor-force participation patterns.

It may be noted that two of the variables discussed in the previous section for the national female population are restricted for the sample population. These are residence and total family income. The sample was made up entirely of low-income persons living in rural areas, and all findings of the study are cast in this subcultural setting.

Type of Employment

Eight occupational groups were used to classify the employed women in the sample population. A larger number of women (23.8 per cent) were classified as domestic or service than were classified in any other group. The representation of women in operative (19.1 per cent) and farm laborer or foremen (18.8 per cent) classes was also relatively large. Nearly one in ten were classed as sales or clerical workers. Fewer employed women were working as laborers (6.6 per cent) or as farm operators or managers (5.8 per cent). Only six women (1.3 per cent) were employed as craftsmen or foremen (Table 2).

The occupational distribution of women in the national labor force is somewhat different. The principal difference appears in employment as a manager, proprietor, professional, or technical worker, and in sales or clerical work. Both classes represent occupations less frequently found in the sample population. The percentage of craftsmen, foremen, and domestic or service workers in the sample was similar to that for the nation, however. In contrast, women workers in the sample were employed relatively more frequently as operatives; nonfarm laborers;

TABLE 2.—Classification of the Female Labor Force by Occupation and Median Income, United States and Sample Population

Occupational Classification	Per Cent of Female Labor Force		Median Income	
	Sample	U.S., 1960**	Sample	U.S., 1958***
Farm operator or manager	5.8	0.6	$ 708	*
Farm laborer or foreman	18.8	1.1	206	*
Manager, proprietor professional or technical	8.8	3.7 13.0	2,555	$2,764 3,528
Sales or clerical	8.4	7.8 29.7	1,916	1,734 3,029
Craftsman or foreman	1.3	1.2	750	*
Domestic or service	23.8	7.9 13.4	619	609 1,394
Operative	19.1	15.4	2,100	2,196
Laborer (except farm)	6.6	0.5	2,000	*
No report	7.5	5.7		

*Median not shown where base is less than 200,000.

**Source: (Per Cent Distribution) Bureau of the Census. *1960 Census of Population*, General Social and Economic Characteristics, U. S. Summary (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), 216, Table 87. (This source lists the median income for the female labor force, 1960, as $2,230. See page 232, Table 98.)

***Source: (Median Income): Bureau of the Census. *Current Population Reports*, Series P-60, No. 33 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 41, Table 28. (This source, in another table which includes all women with income, lists the median income for farm laborer or foreman as $279. This number is possibly somewhat lower than the median income of women in the labor force who have this occupational classification.)

or as farm operators, managers, laborers, or foremen. The under-representation of office jobs and the over-representation of agricultural workers was expected, and is explained by the difference in employment opportunities in rural areas, as brought out previously.

Annual Earnings – Employed women in the sample reported median annual earnings of $870 for the preceding year (Table 3).

The fact that this figure is below half the median earnings of employed women in the nation is not surprising, in view of the nature of the study group. Almost one-third of the women in the sample (31.9 per cent) had earned less than $500 during the year. This is a somewhat larger percentage than is characteristic of the national female labor force. The difference in the median income for the two groups, however, is apparently greater at the other end of the income scale. In the sample, less than one-tenth of the employed women reported an income of $3,000 or more, while almost one-quarter of the employed women in the nation reported earnings of this size.

TABLE 3.—Classification of the Female Labor Force by Income Distribution, United States, 1960, and Sample Population

Income Distribution	Per Cent of the Female Labor Force	
	Sample	U.S., 1960
$ 1– 499	31.9	22.9
500– 999	16.5	19.3
1,000–1,499	7.1	11.0
1,500–1,999	8.4	7.9
2,000–2,499	18.2	8.3
2,500–2,999		6.1
3,000 or more	9.2	24.8
No report	8.8	. . .
Median income	$870	$2,230

Source: Bureau of the Census, *1960 Census of Population*, General Social and Economic Characteristics, U. S. Summary (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), 231, Table 97. Median income, from Table 98, p. 232.

The association of low income with agricultural work and of high income with white collar work is evident in Table 2. Women in the sample who were employed as farm laborers or foremen reported the lowest median income of all groups, $206. Low reported median incomes were also characteristic of domestic and service workers and of the other group of agricultural workers. The highest median income, $2,555, was reported by women employed as managers, proprietors, professionals, or technical workers. For each occupational classification, the median income reported by employed women in the sample was much lower than the median income reported by employed women in the nation. The only exception to this general pattern was found in the class of female operatives, who reported a median income very similar to the national norm. This finding may be a result of the recent trend toward rural industrialization.

Motivation for Work — The stimulus for women to participate in the labor force has been described as being primarily two-fold: economic necessity and personal satisfaction. The former was tested for the sample population through an analysis of the relationship between total family income and female labor force participation, and will be discussed in that connection. The latter was tested through analysis of the interviewees' response to the question, "What things about your present or most recent job do you like or dislike most?"

Findings indicated that attitudes toward employment were closely related to the level of earnings received. This pattern of responses also characterizes the national female labor force. The median income reported by those in the sample population who expressed an unfavorable attitude toward employment was $494, while those expressing a favorable attitude toward employment reported a median income of more than twice that amount — $1,181 (Table 4). The former figure is much below the median earnings for employed women in the sample ($870), and the latter figure is well above that amount.

TABLE 4.—Classification of Employed Women in the Sample Population by Attitude Toward Employment and by Occupation and Median Income

Occupational Classification	Attitude toward Employment									
	Favorable		Mixed		Unfavorable		No Information		Total	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Farm operator or manager	2	7.4	..	...	3	11.1	22	81.5	27	100.0
Farm laborer or foreman	20	22.7	8	9.1	46	52.3	14	15.9	88	100.0
Manager, proprietor, professional or technical	18	43.9	15	36.5	4	9.8	4	9.8	41	100.0
Sales or clerical	17	43.6	13	33.3	4	10.3	5	12.8	39	100.0
Craftsman or foreman	1	16.7	..	...	3	50.0	2	33.8	6	100.0
Domestic or service	48	43.3	35	31.5	15	13.5	13	11.7	111	100.0
Operative	31	34.9	30	33.7	17	19.1	11	12.3	89	100.0
Laborer	14	45.1	9	29.0	6	19.4	2	6.5	31	100.0
Total	166	35.5	120	25.7	103	22.1	78	16.7	467	100.0
Median income of those reporting	$1,181		$1,225		$ 494		$ 688		$ 870	

Attitude toward employment also varied according to the occupational classification of the women responding. The majority of the farm laborers and foremen responded with unfavorable attitudes. By contrast, women employed as managers, proprietors, professionals, or technical workers largely responded with favorable comments. Domestic or service workers followed more closely the pattern of the latter rather than of the agricultural workers. It was anticipated that women employed in this capacity would have been less favorably disposed toward gainful employment, for such work is held in low esteem by the larger society.

Women in the sample more often responded with favorable attitudes than in any other way; that is, with mixed feelings about working or with unfavorable remarks. It appears that women in the sample who were employed generally had a favorable attitude toward their work situation. It should be noted that economic necessity, rather than personal satisfaction, is generally accepted as the stimulus for low-income women to participate in the labor force. The findings would indicate that both stimuli motivate rural low-income women in the South.

Marital Status and Family Characteristics

Previous studies have determined that the most significant variables affecting female labor force participation patterns are marital status and family characteristics. It was not surprising to find this pattern prevalent in the sample of women studied. When measured by the chi square test, the differences in marital status between the employed and unemployed women were statistically significant. Table 5 shows that unemployed women were more likely to be married than were other women in the sample. Employed women, by contrast, more typically were never married, or were divorced or separated. Widowed women contributed a proportionately greater number to the ranks of the employed women than to the ranks of the unemployed. Many of the widows were not, however, eligible for the labor force because of age or infirmity. Again the patterns follow closely those known to exist in the greater society. They can be explained in precisely the same manner. In the national population in 1959, for example, 50 per cent of the women who were heads of households were in the labor force, while only 31 per cent of the homemakers (wives living with their husbands) were employed.[14] Thus, as may be seen in Table 6, the absence of a primary breadwinner was more significantly related to women working than the disability or retirement of the husband. Only one-fifth of the unemployed women (19.6 per cent) had husbands who were not able to work or had no husband. By contrast, of the employed women in the sample, almost one out of three either did not have husbands or had husbands who were not providing for the family because of retirement or disability.

[14]USDL, Women's Bureau, *1960 Handbook on Women Workers*, Bulletin 275 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 39.

TABLE 5.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Women in the Sample Population by Marital Status

Marital Status	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Married	376	80.5	944	91.1
Never married	6	1.3	5	0.5
Divorced or separated	30	6.4	15	1.5
Widowed	55	11.8	72	6.9
Total	467	100.0	1,036	100.0
$x^2 = 45.204$	d.f. = 3		P<.001	

TABLE 6.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Women in the Sample Population by Availability of Husband for Work

Availability of Husband for Work	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Eligible for the labor force	330	71.3	829	80.4
Fully able to work	295	63.7	710	68.9
Limited permanent disability	35	7.6	119	11.5
Ineligible for the labor force or absent from the household	133	28.7	202	19.6
Total disability	21	4.5	73	7.1
Retired (no disability)	18	3.9	33	3.2
Absent (woman head)	94	20.3	96	9.3
Total	463	100.0	1,031	100.0

When the data were reworked so as to include homemakers only, there was less distinction between employed and unemployed women. Approximately 10 per cent of the husbands of both employed and unemployed homemakers were ineligible for the labor force (Table 7). Why no more difference was found between employed and unemployed women in the availability of husbands for work is not easily explained. It was anticipated that disability, as well as the lack of a

TABLE 7.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Homemakers* in the Sample Population by Availability of Husband for Work

Availability of Husband for Work	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Fully able to work	295	80.0	710	75.9
Limited permanent disability	35	9.5	119	12.8
Total disability	21	5.6	73	7.8
Retired (no disability)	18	4.9	33	3.5
Total	369	100.0	935	100.0

*Married women, husband present.

husband, would have acted as a stimulus to increase female labor-force participation.

Single Women — The sample population included only six employed single women, slightly more than one-half of those who were eligible for employment. The national employment rate for women never married is very similar to that of the sample. Three-fourths of the employed single women were in agricultural occupations. The only other occupational classification represented was that of clerical and sales workers. Women never married reported a median income of $563 (Table 8). The size of the sample of single women is too small to allow statistical comparison. However, it may be noted that their occupational distribution is very dissimilar to that of single women in the nation. One explanation for this variation, and of the low median income, may be found in the fact that 50 per cent of these women were managing or operating family farms, which perhaps they inherited.

Divorced and Separated Women — Thirty of the 47 women in the sample who were divorced or separated were employed. The extremely high employment rate among such women is a national pattern which results from the necessity of self-support. These women were heavily concentrated at the bottom of the occupational ladder. Over one-third of them were employed as domestic or service workers. Almost the same relative number were classifiable as agricultural workers. Of the remainder, most were laborers. The median income reported by this group was the lowest of all groups of working women, $500. These characteristics are typical of national patterns.

Widowed Women — The employment pattern characteristic of the 216 widows in the sample differed from that of the divorced and separated women in only one way; a smaller percentage were employed. Slightly over one-fourth of these women (55) said they were employed. Although a larger number of these women (72) were unemployed, more of them were retired or totally disabled (85). These findings are consistent with national patterns.

The employed widows were concentrated in the lower income and occupational levels. Three-fifths of them were employed in agriculture. Although the widowed women formed only a small proportion of the female labor force for the sample, they filled over three-fourths of all the positions as farm operators or managers. This finding apparently is related to the fact that farms were inherited from deceased spouses.

The next highest employment concentration of widows was as domestic or service workers. The median income reported by widowed women was $650. The occupational and income characteristics of widowed women were also consistent with national patterns.

The presence of children did not appreciably alter the higher employment rate which characterized women who were divorced, separated; or widowed. Three-fourths of these women whose youngest child was no older than 9 years of age were in the labor force, and a majority of the mothers of older children were also gainfully employed.

TABLE 8.—Classification of Employed Women in the Sample Population by Marital Status, Occupation, and Median Income

Occupational Classification	Single		Married		Divorced, Separated		Widowed		Total	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Farm operator or manager	3	50.0	..	...	3	10.0	21	38.2	27	5.8
Farm laborer or foreman	1	16.7	69	18.4	6	20.0	12	21.8	88	18.8
Manager, proprietor, professional or technical	..	...	37	9.8	2	6.7	2	3.6	41	8.8
Sales or clerical	1	16.7	36	9.6	..	...	2	3.6	39	8.4
Craftsman or foreman	.	...	6	1.6	..	...	..	...	6	1.3
Domestic or service	.	...	92	24.5	11	36.7	8	14.5	111	23.8
Operative	.	...	81	21.5	2	6.7	6	10.9	89	19.1
Laborer	.	...	25	6.6	4	13.3	2	3.6	31	6.6
No information	1	16.7	30	8.0	2	6.7	2	3.6	35	7.5
Total	6	100.0	376	100.0	30	100.0	55	100.0	467	100.0
Median income of those reporting	$563		$1,069		$500		$650		$870	

Economic necessity appears to be the important explanation for the high employment of such women in both the sample and the nation.

Married Women — Married women, with husbands present, differed appreciably from other women in their labor force participation patterns, in both employment rate and occupational classifications. When measured by the chi square test, employment and marital status were statistically significant (Table 5 and Table 9). Married women were over-represented in operative positions and as clerical or sales personnel. They were also prominent as managers, proprietors, professionals, or technicians and as domestic or service workers. They were under-represented as farm laborers or foremen, and none were employed as farm operators or managers. The median income reported by married women also varied from that of women in other marital status classes. They earned almost twice as much as was reported by women in any other marital status class.

TABLE 9.—Employed Women in the Sample Population by Marital Status and Occupation

Occupational Classification	Married		Other Marital Status		Total	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Farm operator or manager	....		27	6.25	27	6.25
Farm laborer or foreman	69	15.97	19	4.40	88	20.37
Manager, proprietor, professional or technical	37	8.56	4	.93	41	9.49
Sales or clerical	36	8.33	3	.69	39	9.02
Domestic or service	92	21.30	19	4.40	111	25.70
Operative; craftsman or foreman*	87	20.14	8	1.85	95	21.99
Laborer	25	5.79	6	1.39	31	7.18
Total	346	80.09	86	19.91	432	100.00
$x^2 = 132.172$		d.f. = 6		$P < .001$		

*Category includes six married women in class of craftsman or foreman.

The variations in labor force participation which are characteristic of married women relate significantly to their family stage, as measured by the chi square test (Table 10). For this reason, the work patterns of married women are discussed in terms of the stages of the family cycle.

The majority of the married women in the sample who were childless and who were relatively young (at least one of the couple under age 35) were gainfully employed. At no other stage in the family cycle were the majority of the married women in the labor force. The recent trend toward continuing employment until the birth of the first child has already been discussed. The fact that the highest employment rate for the married women studied was found among young childless wives is evidence that rural low-income areas differ little from the rest of the nation in this respect.

One-half of the young childless wives working were employed as domestic or service workers (25.0 per cent) or as operatives (25.0 per

TABLE 10.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Homemakers* in the Sample Population by Stage in Family Cycle

Stage in Family Cycle	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Couple only, age less than 35	24	6.5	22	2.3
Couple with children				
Age 3 or less	23	6.2	44	4.7
Age 4 – 9	53	14.3	114	12.2
Age 10 – 17	100	27.1	236	25.1
Age 18 or more	88	23.8	288	30.7
Couple only, age 35-59	56	15.1	120	12.8
Couple only, age 60 or more	26	7.0	114	12.2
Total	370	100.0	938	100.0
$x^2 = 28.164$	d.f. = 6		P< .001	

*Married women, husband present.

cent) (Table 11). This occupational distribution is quite different from the national picture in that this class of working women are most often found in clerical and sales work. Opportunities to work in offices and retail establishments are, of course, scarce in rural areas.

In the national female labor force, women are least apt to be employed if young children are present in the household; and the age of the youngest child remains inversely proportional to the mother's labor-force participation. In the sample, this pattern was reversed. The explanation must be sought in the make-up (rural and low-income) of the sample population. Apparently when the dependency ratio of the family is increased (by the presence of children) the economic needs of the family unit are increased enough to force employment. Other studies have shown this to be true, *i.e.*, when the husband's earnings were not sufficient to meet living costs, the wives were more prone to work.

It is important to note that, as a factor related to women's working, marital status was more important than presence of children. The rate of employment for mothers who had children present was consistently much lower for the married mothers than for the mothers of other marital status (separated, divorced, or widowed).

The occupational distribution characteristic of young married mothers in the sample also differed from the national picture. They reported a median income which was considerably above the median earnings of all married women, and almost twice the amount reported by all employed women. Nearly one-half of the young married mothers who were employed worked as operatives. Young mothers in the national labor force, on the other hand, are concentrated in low-paying jobs. This pattern continued through the next stage of the family cycle (couples with school-age children). For the sample, earnings remained relatively high and the occupational concentration continued to be in the class of operatives.

TABLE 11.—Classification of Employed Homemakers* in the Sample Population by Stage in Family Cycle, Occupation, and Median Income

Occupational Classification	Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3		Stage 4		Stage 5		Stage 6		Stage 7	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Farm laborer or foreman	3	12.5	1	4.3	7	13.2	17	17.0	24	27.3	9	16.1	8	30.8
Manager, proprietor, professional or technical**	4	16.6	3	13.0	5	9.4	10	10.0	6	6.8	4	7.1	4	15.4
Sales or clerical	3	12.5	2	8.8	3	5.7	12	12.0	2	2.3	12	21.4	2	7.7
Craftsman or foreman	..	....	..	....	..	....	3	3.0	1	1.1	1	1.9	1	3.9
Domestic or service**	6	25.0	4	17.4	10	18.9	26	26.0	27	30.7	12	21.4	3	11.5
Operative	6	25.0	10	43.5	16	30.2	19	19.0	16	18.2	11	19.6	3	11.5
Laborer	1	4.2	1	4.3	4	7.5	6	6.0	6	6.8	5	8.9	2	7.7
No information**	1	4.2	2	8.7	8	15.1	7	7.0	6	6.8	2	3.6	3	11.5
Total	24	100.0	23	100.0	53	100.0	100	100.0	88	100.0	56	100.0	26	100.0

*Married women, husband present.

**One woman of this classification not reporting stage in family cycle.

STAGE IN FAMILY CYCLE:
1. Couple only, age less than 35
2. Children, age 3 or less
3. Children, age 4 – 9
4. Children, age 10 – 17
5. Children, age 18 or more
6. Couple only, age 35 – 59
7. Couple only, age 60 or more

Mothers of children age 18 or more who live with them participated even less in the labor force than did mothers of younger children. Only one in five of these women was employed. This finding probably is due in part to the earning power of grown children and in part to the age of the mother. These mothers were most often employed as domestic or service workers, or as farm laborers or foremen. The median income of this group was the lowest of all groups of married women studied.

The percentage of women employed decreased with each ensuing stage of the family cycle where children were present. However, the fact that an increasing number of women were involved at each successive stage meant that larger contributions (in numbers) were made to the employed womanpower as the age of the youngest child increased.

The data did not permit study of women after active motherhood separate from women who had remained childless. However, the two groups have characteristics in common, such as the fact that both include relatively high percentages of employed women. Such a pattern held true for the sample population. This stage of the family cycle was defined for the sample population so as to include all couples where neither spouse was younger than age 35, nor both older than 59 years of age. Approximately one-fifth of the employed women in this stage were employed in each of three classes of work: domestic or service, sales or clerical, and operative. It may be noted that this group of working women were more often employed in sales and clerical positions than was characteristic of women at any other stage of the family cycle.

Women who were in the final stage of the family cycle were least active in the labor force of all groups of married women studied. This finding is in keeping with the national pattern. Of those women who were employed, most worked as farm laborers or foremen.

Age Status

In the sample population, employed women were characteristically younger than other women (Table 12). When measured by the chi square test, the age difference between employed and unemployed women was statistically important. The employed women were over-represented at the lower age levels and under-represented at the higher age levels. The median age of employed women in the United States in 1961 was 40.4 years, which is only 2 years younger than was reported by the employed women in the sample.

Employed women in the sample population apparently reached their peak earnings at a much lower age than is characteristic of the female labor force of the nation. For these women, the peak in earnings was reached during their 30s, while for the employed women in the nation peak earnings are reached from age 45 to age 54 (Table 13). The arrival of the peak in earning capacity at late middle age is not only characteristic of women in the United States, but is also a phenomenon for American men. The arrival of peak earnings at late middle age is associated with increase in training, experience, and seniority, before the

TABLE 12.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Women in the Sample Population by Age

Age	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Under 20	8	1.7	24	2.4
20–29	73	15.9	124	12.2
30–39	127	27.6	223	21.9
40–44*	55	11.5	130	12.7
45–49*	62	13.5	132	12.9
50–54*	68	14.8	132	12.9
55–64	44	9.6	174	17.1
65–74	19	4.1	65	6.4
75 or more	4	0.9	16	1.5
Total	460	100.0	1,020	100.0
Median age of those reporting	42.0		45.3	
$x^2 = 25.352$	d.f. = 8		$P < .01$	

*Category is one-half the size of other categories.

TABLE 13.—Classification of the Female Labor Force by Age and Median Income, United States and Sample Population

Age	Per Cent Distribution of Labor Force	Median Income Reported
Sample		
Under 20	1.7	$ 833
20–29	15.9	639
30–39	27.6	1,214
40–44*	11.9	705
45–54	28.3	804
55–64	9.6	525
65–74	4.1	500
75 or more	0.9	500
United States		
14–19	...	370
20–24*		1,572
25–34	18	1,671
35–44	23	1,817
45–54	22	1,884
55–64	13	1,326
65 or more	4	776

*Category is half the size of other categories.

Source: (Per Cent): USDL, Women's Bureau, *1960 Handbook on Women Workers*, Bulletin 275 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 28, Table 12. Distribution of U. S. female labor force for younger ages is as follows: Ages 14-17, 4 per cent; ages 18-24, 16 per cent.

Source: (Median Income): Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-60, No. 33 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 35, Table 24.

onset of physical decline or retirement. Explanation must be sought elsewhere for women in the rural low-income areas of the South. The peak in reported earnings for such women was associated with the age and income variables related to specific occupations. In those occupations for which the lowest median age was reported, the highest median earnings occurred (Table 14). These occupational classifications were: operative (median 35 years); sales or clerical (38 years); and manager proprietor, professional, or technical (42 years). Since the lowest ages and the highest incomes occurred in precisely the same occupational classes, this association serves to explain in large part the arrival of the peak earnings at an unusually early age for the employed women in the sample.

TABLE 14.—Classification of Employed Women in the Sample Population by Occupation, Median Age, and Median Income

Occupational Classification	Median Age of Those Reporting	Median Income of Those Reporting
Farm operator or manager	55.8	$ 708
Farm laborer or foreman	45.9	206
Manager, proprietor, professional, or technical	41.7	2,555
Sales or clerical	38.2	1,916
Craftsman or foreman	45.0	750
Domestic or service	42.5	619
Operative	35.1	2,100
Laborer	62.5	2,000
Median of employed women	42.0	$ 870

Educational Status

In the sample population, employed women characteristically had completed more years of schooling than was reported by unemployed women (Table 15). The educational differences between these two groups of women are statistically significant as measured by the chi square test. More than two-fifths of the unemployed women had not completed grade school, while only about one-third of the employed women had so little formal schooling. Relatively twice as many of the women in the employed group (28.3 per cent) as in the unemployed group (15.1 per cent) had completed at least high school. Twice the number of women in the employed group were college graduates than were in the unemployed group.

In Table 16 one may note that the median level of educational attainment for women in the national female labor force is three years higher than is characteristic of employed women in the sample. This pattern is typical for the population studied, as explained previously.

Increased educational attainment is generally accompanied by increased income. This pattern held true for the same population. The median income reported by employed women in the sample population,

TABLE 15.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Women in the Sample Population by Education

Years of School Completed	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
None	10	2.2	14	1.4
1–3	32	7.0	62	6.1
4	18	4.0	65	2.4
5–7	100	21.9	274	27.0
8	62	13.6	223	22.0
9–11	105	23.0	223	22.0
12	86	18.9	126	12.4
13–15	21	4.6	16	1.6
16 or more	22	4.8	11	1.1
Total	456	100.0	1,014	100.0
Median years of school completed by those reporting	9.2		8.4	
$x^2 = 63.475$	d.f. = 8		$P < .001$	

as for employed women in the nation as a whole, increased with education (Table 16). This pattern has already been discussed in connection with the national female labor force and is explained in terms of educational characteristics of high-paying positions. These occupations which offer the highest financial remuneration are precisely the ones which require the most educational preparation by the participants. Women working as managers, proprietors, professionals or technicians had the highest median level of educational attainment (15.5 years) and also reported the highest median income (Table 17). Following the same

TABLE 16.—Classification of the Female Labor Force by Education and Median Income, United States and Sample Population

Years of Schooling Completed	Per Cent of Female Labor Force		Median Income	
	Sample	U.S., 1959	Sample	U.S., 1958
Less than 8 years	34.3	11	$ 391	$ 711
0–4 years	12.9	3	300	*
5–7 years	21.4	8	471	*
8 years	13.3	13	1,050	909
9–11 years	22.4	19	1,396	867
12 years	18.4	38	2,016	2,036
13–15 years	4.5	10	2,812	1,865
16 years or more	4.7	8	> 3,000	3,309
No report	2.4	1		
Median	9.2 yrs.	12.2 yrs.	$ 870	$2,210

*Data not available.

Source: (Per Cent distribution): USDL, Women's Bureau, *1960 Handbook on Women Workers*, Bulletin 275 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 94, Table 3.

Source: (Median Income): Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-60, No. 33 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 38, Table 26.

TABLE 17.—Classification of Employed Women in the Sample Population by Occupation, Median Years of School Completed, and Median Income

Occupational Classification	Median Years of Schooling Completed by Those Reporting	Median Income of Those Reporting
Farm laborer or manager	7.7	$ 708
Farm laborer or foreman	6.0	206
Manager, proprietor, professional, or technical	15.5	2,555
Sales or clerical	12.2	1,916
Craftsman or foreman	11.0	750
Domestic or service	8.5	619
Operative	10.3	2,100
Laborer	9.8	2,000
Median of employed women	9.2	$ 870

pattern, women who were employed as farm laborers or foremen had the lowest level of educational attainment (a median of 6.0 years) and also reported the lowest median income. The patterns of education and occupation which characterize the sample population are explained in the same way as they are for the national female labor force.

Total Family Income

The income reported by families where the woman was unemployed was close to the median family income for the entire sample population ($1,602). In contrast, families in which women were actively employed reported a considerably higher income, $2,108 (Table 18).

TABLE 18.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Women in the Sample Population by Total Family Income

Total Family Income	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
$ 1 – 499	27	6.3	126	13.8
500 – 999	74	17.4	177	19.5
1,000 – 1,499	48	11.3	133	14.6
1,500 – 1,999	39	9.1	94	10.5
2,000 – 3,999*	115	27.0	223	24.6
4,000 or more	123	28.9	155	17.0
Total	426	100.0	908	100.0
Median income reported	$2,108		$1,696	

*Category is four times larger than other categories.

A study of household or family income is more meaningful, perhaps, when sex of family head is taken into consideration. The median income of the households and families studied varied significantly with the sex of the head. Families with male heads had a median family income of $1,676, but households headed by a woman reported a median of only $927. Income also varied with the employment of the woman within the family and/or household. Of the families with male heads,

those in which the wife worked had a median family income of $2,978, and those in which the wife did not work had a median of $1,663. Of those households which had a female head, those in which the woman head worked had a median total income of $896, and those in which the woman head was not in the labor force had a median income of $673. As may be seen in Table 19, for the households in the sample

TABLE 19.—Classification of Family Head by Median Income, United States, 1958, and Sample Population

Family Status	Per Cent of Families		Median Income of Families	
	Sample	U.S.	Sample	U.S.
All families	100.0	100.0	$1,602	$5,087
Families with male heads	84.0	90	1,676	5,292
Wife in labor force	21.0	25	2,978	6,214
Wife not in labor force	63.0	62	1,663	4,983
Families with female heads	16.0	10	927	2,741
Woman in labor force	5.0	*	896	*
Woman not in labor force	11.0	*	673	*

*Data not available.

Source: USDL, Women's Bureau, *1960 Handbook on Women Workers*, Bulletin 275 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1960), 63, Table 5.

population the variation in total family income related to the sex of the head and to the employment of the wife follows the general pattern characteristic of the nation. However, as was mentioned previously, in all comparisons the incomes were much lower in the sample population. In each case, families with male heads had a median total income above that of all families and/or households, while the median total income of households headed by a woman was about half the size of the norm. The employment of the wife also caused an upward variation in the total family income in both the sample population and in the nation's population as a whole. These pattern variations for the sample may be explained in precisely the same way in which they are explained for the nation.

A comparison of the contribution of the income of the working woman to the total family income reveals a significant point for the sample population. The employee wife's income (a median of $1,077) very nearly accounted for the difference in total family income between those families in which the wife did and in which the wife did not work. But in households with women heads, the work income of the employed women (a median of $610) accounted for much more than the difference in total family income between households in which the women did and in which the women did not work. In this case, the women's work income accounted for three times the difference in income. The median work income of $610 (of employed women who were heads of households) accounted for almost three-fourths of the total income of those households. This finding reveals how the fact of eco-

nomic necessity is related to female employment in households where a male head is absent.

Level of Living

Level of living was measured by possession of 13 selected items. Table 20 shows the number of items possessed and the percentage of the women in each study group whose family possessed the particular technological aid to house care. Differences in possession of these items between employed and unemployed women were statistically significant when measured by the chi square test. However, the difference between employed and unemployed women was in the possession of particular items rather than in a variation of the average number of total items possessed per family or household studied.

The following items were possessed more frequently by the employed women than by the unemployed: central heating (6.0 per cent more), home freezers (5.7 per cent), automobiles (4.6 per cent), telephones (3.8 per cent), and a smaller percentage margin of electric sewing machines, electricity, hot water heaters, and gas or electric ranges. Technological aids used in measuring level of living more often possessed by unemployed women were washing machines (14.1 per cent more), kitchen sinks (4.8 per cent), and piped water and refrigerators. The same relative number of employed and unemployed women possessed vacuum cleaners.

Study of the measure of level-of-living aspiration revealed that no significant difference existed between employed and unemployed wo-

TABLE 20.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Women in the Sample Population According to Family* Ownership or Use of Selected Level of Living Items

Selected Level of Living Items	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Automobile	301	66.8	641	62.2
Gas or electric range	326	70.3	719	69.7
Central heating	68	14.7	90	8.7
Piped water	227	48.9	528	51.0
Hot water heater	169	36.4	362	35.1
Electricity	451	97.2	976	94.7
Telephone	144	31.0	280	27.2
Electric sewing machine	148	31.9	295	28.6
Mechanical refrigerator	406	87.5	913	88.6
Home freezer	178	38.4	337	32.7
Kitchen sink	240	51.7	582	56.5
Vacuum cleaner	119	25.6	266	25.8
Washing machine	285	61.4	768	74.5
Average number of items possessed	6.6		6.6	
$x^2 = 27.556$	d.f. = 12		$P < .01$	

*Family (or household).

men, as tested by the chi square test. This finding is related to the low-income nature of the sample. The majority of the women as a whole, and of the women of each study group, desired improvement in housing. A larger percentage of the remainder mentioned that they needed more money for living expenses (Table 21). Only a few of even the employed women felt that their level of living was sufficient to allow use of additional money for items which were not necessities, such as charity or religious donations, recreation, health, or educational uses.

This finding seems contradictory to the fact that most women, whether employed or not, expressed satisfaction with their lot (Table 22). In a rural democratic society there is a tendency among people to aspire to an improved status, but not to admit dissatisfaction with prevailing circumstances. Nor will rural residents generally admit that real social differences exist which result from the improved status. The total family income of the employed women was larger, and it could be expected that they would have been more satisfied; yet this was not what was reported.

TABLE 21.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Women in the Sample Population by Level-of-Living Aspiration

Expected use of $2,000	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Living expenses	114	25.0	216	21.6
Housing	248	54.4	572	57.1
Communications	12	2.6	22	2.2
Farm and/or business	21	4.6	60	6.0
Health	8	1.7	27	2.7
Savings	20	4.4	57	5.7
Charity and religious donations, or recreation	4	0.9	12	1.2
Education	29	6.4	35	3.5
Total	456	100.0	1,001	100.0
$x^2 = 11.391$	d.f. = 7		P> .01	

TABLE 22.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Women in the Sample Population by Assessment of Level of Living

Woman's Satisfaction With Family Income	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Very satisfactory	12	2.6	27	2.6
Satisfactory	262	56.5	604	59.2
Unsatisfactory	190	40.9	390	38.2
Total	464	100.0	1,021	100.0
$x^2 = 1.069$	d.f. = 2		P> .01	

Residence

The unemployed women were more likely to have a rural farm residence, while the employed women were more likely to live in rural nonfarm dwellings (Table 23). This pattern is in keeping with the findings of other studies and is explained in terms of the work demands associated with farm life.

The percentage of rural farm women who were employed in the low-income rural areas of the South (24.0 per cent) compares closely to the percentage of rural farm women in the nation who are employed (22.9 per cent). Likewise, the percentage of rural nonfarm women in the sample who were employed (29.3 per cent) is very similar to the percentage of rural nonfarm women in the nation who are employed (28.8 per cent). In both cases, it may be noted that employment rates in the sample are slightly higher for the specified residence than are those in the nation. This approximation of the work rate for national population, rural farm and nonfarm, can be explained in precisely the same way as it was for the national rural population somewhat earlier in the discussion.

TABLE 23.—Classification of Employed and Unemployed Women in the Sample Population by Residence

Residence	Employed		Unemployed	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Rural farm	157	35.7	418	44.8
Rural nonfarm	283	64.3	516	55.2
Total	440	100.0	934	100.0